

### **3.4.8 Neighborhood**

#### **I. PURPOSE.**

There is growing interest in the impact that the neighborhood environment has on people's health and health behaviors. The effect that the neighborhood environment has on residents' health may be related to the availability of resources and to mechanisms involving neighborhood sources of stress or social cohesion. The objective of this questionnaire is to obtain some basic information on the characteristics of the neighborhoods in which participants live.

#### **II. MATERIALS/EQUIPMENT**

This is a self-administered form. Provide the participant with the form and a pencil and give him/her brief instructions for completion.

#### **III. DEFINITIONS**

The terms used in the questionnaire should require no explanation, because they are used in the way they tend to be used by most people in every day life.

#### **IV. METHODS**

##### **1. General Instructions**

- 1.1 It is important that the participant have a quiet, private room, with table and comfortable chair, to complete the form. Instruct the participant to answer each question by darkening the circle of the appropriate response. Review the top section of the form with the participant before starting. Emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers and that we are interested in their feelings and opinions about things. Also emphasize that they should not spend too much time on any one question. Show them that additional instructions are provided at the beginning of each section.
- 1.2 Ask the participant to try to respond to all questions (unless the instructions tell him/her to skip the question). Remind the person to request assistance from a staff member if anything is unclear. Most participants should be able to complete the questionnaire on their own. However, if the participant has difficulty reading or understanding the questions, offer to make arrangements for an interviewer-administered version in the appropriate language.
- 1.3 If the topic should arise, remind the participant that all information is

strictly confidential and will be used only for research purposes. Explain that information about people's neighborhoods may be important to their health. The information may, in turn, help us to better understand the causes of heart disease.

- 1.4 The measurement of these dimensions is complex. Generally they are measured using scales or collections of questions that attempt to get at the same underlying concept in different ways. For this reason some of the questions may seem repetitive. If the participant asks about this, acknowledge that some questions may seem similar, but ask him/her to respond to each one separately.
- 1.5 The terms used will be understood by most people. If a participant does not understand a question, please re-read the question to him/her. Obtain a copy of a translated form, if necessary. Do not attempt to explain the question or provide synonyms (unless specified in the specific instructions below), because this may create problems for some of the scales.

## 2. Specific Instructions for Completing the Neighborhood Questionnaire

The term "neighborhood" is defined on the form. However, this definition is not strict, and participants may define the term as they wish.

*"Things about people's neighborhoods may be important to their health. Now we would like to ask you some questions about what it is like to live in your neighborhood. By neighborhood we mean the area around where you live and around your house. It may include places you shop, religious or public institutions, or a local business district. It is the general area around your house where you might perform routine tasks, such as shopping, going to the park, or visiting with neighbors. Please take the time to answer carefully, but do not spend too much time on any one question. Remember that there are no right or wrong answers. We appreciate your taking the time to complete this questionnaire."*

1. **How many blocks are in the area that you think of as your neighborhood?** Provide an *estimate*.
2. **How long have you lived in this neighborhood?** Provide number of years *or* number of months.
3. **For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you agree or disagree by choosing the best option.** Possible answers are "strongly agree," "agree," "neither agree nor disagree," "disagree," or "strongly disagree." Answers are selected by filling in the appropriate circle.

- a. This is a close-knit neighborhood.
  - b. People around here are willing to help their neighbors.
  - c. People in this neighborhood generally don't get along with each other.
  - d. People in this neighborhood can be trusted.
  - e. People in this neighborhood do not share the same values.
4. **How safe from crime do you consider your neighborhood to be?**  
Provide rating on a scale from 1–5 (“very safe”–“not safe at all”).  
Answer is selected by filling in the appropriate circle.
5. **Think about your neighborhood as a whole and then please check one box for each of the following to show how much of a problem each one is in your neighborhood.** Possible answers are “very serious problem,” “somewhat serious problem,” “minor problem,” or “not really a problem.”
- a. Excessive noise
  - b. Heavy traffic or speeding cars
  - c. Lack of access to adequate food shopping
  - d. Lack of parks or playgrounds
  - e. Trash and litter
  - f. No sidewalks or poorly maintained sidewalks
  - g. Violence

In the box labeled, “For MESA Field Center Use Only,” select whether the form was self-administered or interviewer-administered. Record reviewer (if form self-administered) or interviewer (if form interviewer-administered) ID number.